

wards and upwards, and is situated at three and a quarter inches from the apex of the beam. The total length of the beam is eight inches, measured in a straight line.

The third pair of horns, (fig. 3.) which must have belonged to an animal considerably older than either of the preceding pairs, exhibits a large brow antler, in length exceeding half that of the beam: here the posterior snag is also large, and is directed backwards and upwards, whilst the apical portion of the beam is directed forward about as much as the snag is directed backwards. The total length of this horn is eleven and a half inches, measured in a straight line.

The last figure (No. 4.) represents the horn of one of the specimens of which an entire skin was brought over. This horn differs only from the last in being slightly larger, and in having two additional small snags, one springing from the under side, and near the apex, of the brow antler, and the other springing from the hinder part, and near the apex of the great posterior snag.

"The Spaniards say they can distinguish how old a deer is by the number of the branches on the horns. They affirmed that the specimen, of which figure 4 represents one of the horns, was nine years old. It certainly was a very old one, as all its teeth were decayed. This specimen was killed at Maldonado, in the middle of June; another specimen was killed at Bahia Blanca, (about three hundred and sixty miles southward,) in the month of October, with the hairy skin on the horns: there were others, however, whose horns were free from skin. At this time of the year, many of the does had just kidded. I was informed, by the Spaniards, that this deer sheds its horns every year.

"The *Cervus campestris* is exceedingly abundant throughout the countries bordering the Plata. It is found in Northern Patagonia as far south as the Rio Negro, (Lat. 41°); but, further southward, none were seen by the officers employed in surveying the coast. It appears to prefer a hilly country; I saw very many small herds, containing from five to seven animals each, near the Sierra Ventana, and among the hills north of Maldonado. If a person, crawling close along the ground, slowly advances towards a herd, the deer frequently approach, out of curiosity, to reconnoitre him. I have by this means killed, from one spot, three out of the same herd. Although thus so tame and inquisitive, yet, when approached on horseback, they are exceedingly wary. In this country nobody goes on foot, and the deer knows man as its enemy, only when he is mounted, and armed with the bolas. At Bahia Blanca, a recent establishment in Northern Patagonia, I was surprised to find how little the deer cared for the noise of a gun: one day, I fired ten times, from within eighty yards, at one animal, and it was much more startled at the ball cutting up the ground, than at the report.

"The most curious fact, with respect to this animal, is the overpoweringly

strong and offensive odour which proceeds from the buck. It is quite indescribable: several times, whilst skinning the specimen, which is now mounted at the Zoological Museum, I was almost overcome by nausea. I tied up the skin in a silk pocket-handkerchief, and so carried it home: this handkerchief, after being well washed, I continually used, and it was, of course, as repeatedly washed; yet every time, when first unfolded, for a space of one year and seven months, I distinctly perceived the odour. This appears an astonishing instance of the permanence of some matter, which in its nature, nevertheless, must be most subtle and volatile. Frequently, when passing at the distance of half a mile to leeward of a herd, I have perceived the whole air tainted with the effluvium. I believe the smell from the buck is most powerful at the period when its horns are perfect, or free from the hairy skin. When in this state the meat is, of course, quite uneatable; but the Spaniards assert, that if buried for some time in fresh earth, the taint is removed. These deer generally weigh about sixty or seventy pounds."—D.

FAMILY—MURIDÆ.

1. *MUS DECUMANUS*.

Mus decumanus, *Auctorum*.

In the extensive collection of Rodent animals brought home by Mr. Darwin, I find several specimens of the above named species, that is to say, animals which resemble the European specimens of *Mus Decumanus* in all those characters which are the least liable to variation in individuals of the same species, such as the proportions which the various parts of the animal bear to each other: they differ, however, somewhat in colouring.

Buenos Ayres, Maldonado, Valparaiso, East Falkland Island, and Keeling Island, are each, it appears, infested with the common European rat. I have now before me two specimens from East Falkland Island, and one specimen from each of the other localities, and among these I find none equal in size to the largest European specimens: as regards the colouring, the Buenos Ayres specimen differs only from the English specimens of *Mus Decumanus*, in having the upper parts of a richer and deeper hue, owing to the tips of the shorter hairs being of a deep yellow instead of pale yellow, and in having a rusty tint over the haunches.